

**MINUTES**  
**STATE PRESERVES ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Wallace State Office Building**  
**January 18, 2008**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Scott Moats  
Cindy Peterson, Chair  
Liz Christiansen  
Armando Rosales  
Deb Lewis  
Gail Brown

**STAFF PRESENT**

John Pearson  
Daryl Howell

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Cindy Peterson called the meeting to order at 10:10 AM on January 18, 2008 at the Wallace State Office Building.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Delay until April meeting: Proposed Bicycle Trail at Starr's Cave Preserve

Addition: Nature Conservancy update on Williams Prairie

Addition: Update on Merritt Forest State Preserve

***Motion was made by Deb Lewis to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Liz Christiansen. Motion carried.***

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Change: The April meeting will no longer be held in Lamson Woods but rather in Allamakee County. Details will follow.

***Motion was made by Liz Christiansen to approve the minutes from the October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007 meeting as amended. Seconded by Scott Moats. Motion carried.***

### **RFP FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009**

The Board was provided with a draft request for proposals for the period of July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009. The RFP will be released in mid January.

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### **FINAL EIS FOR HIGHWAY 100 EXTENSION**

A draft letter was prepared by Cindy Peterson and the DNR staff. The Board is asked to review and approve the letter to be sent to the Iowa Department of Transportation.

John Pearson said the Department of Transportation has put forth a final route proposal, which was chosen from ten other alternatives. The route was adjusted to avoid most of the threatened and endangered species within the preserve. The DNR has recommended that the D.O.T. build a high bridge to help minimize the impacts to the box turtles and other wildlife. At this point, the D.O.T. has incorporated a number of environmental recommendations into their plan.

<b><i>Motion was made by Armando Rosales to approve the comment letter to be sent to the D.O.T. Seconded by Deb Lewis. Motion carried.</i></b>
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### **PROPOSED TRAIL AT LAMSON WOODS PRESERVE**

Ron Blair presented the following information:

1. The developers on the west side of Mint Blvd. were approached regarding an easement along their eastern boundary line. They have a polite but emphatic "No."
2. The developers have no intention of hard surfacing any portion of Mint Blvd.
3. The County Engineer estimates a cost of \$25,000 - \$30,000 for the Trails Council to seal coat that section of Mint Blvd. plus there would be yearly upkeep charges.
4. The County Supervisor, Mike Pech, who lives on Mint Blvd, at the southernmost end of Lamson Woods recommends that we do not use Mint Blvd as a shared roadway. There is one fellow, a Vietnam vet who is wheelchair bound, who lives at the end of Mint Blvd.
5. Local engineer Kent Rice from French-Reneker & Associates, did walk the entire roadbed. Kent recommends 2' of fill on 20% of the roadbed. Though not absolutely required, he would like to see 1' fill on the remaining section to avoid washouts from water over-topping the trail.

6. From the Trails Council and the City of Fairfield's perspective, the roadbed is an old, pre-existing transportation corridor ideally suited for this purpose. The ground has been disturbed in recent times.
7. As previously conveyed to the Preserve Board the Trails Council would willingly give up the small walking trail in the northeast corner of the Preserve in order to have use of the old roadbed.
8. Great care would be taken in bringing in fill and granular material to establish the trail.
9. In a December conversation with Laura McCormick, we agreed on the following 3 points should the Preserve Board allow Trail use of the old roadbed:
  - a. We would work together to establish the best point of crossing Mint Blvd, north of Crow Creek, to enter the Preserve in the least invasive manner.
  - b. We agree that the old bridge should stay in its current location and be restored. The Trails Council would put in appropriate posts and signs that would prevent cyclists from entering the Preserve from that direction but would allow walkers to enter.
  - c. We agree that at the north end of the roadbed, rather than coming out onto the County ROW, near the LISCO hub and re-entering the Preserve, the Trails Council would build a longer bridge from the roadbed directly to the grass area to the east.

***Motion was made by Scott Moats not to approve the proposed Lamson Woods trail as presently designed. Seconded by Liz Christiansen.***

Scott Moats said that he is concerned with the wetness of the area, feasibility of construction, water flow, and endangering species. It's not uncommon for trail systems to share a roadway especially in the instance where it's only for 600 feet.

Deb Lewis said that she is concerned about allowing bicycle recreation into a preserve as compared to passive recreation like hiking.

Ron Blair said that the trail system is primarily used by families and people who want solitude. It seems that the best way to educate people about preserving nature is to get them into nature. The railroad bed does not go through the heart of the preserve.

Scott Moats said that if this trail were to be approved, then interpretive signage should be posted stating the value of the area and not to allow any new trails regardless of the design or placement.

Discussion continued amongst the board members regarding the hydrology of the area and the feasibility of building a trail in the location proposed.

Liz Christiansen said that if the trail were to be approved, the passive use of the trail system now would change to a more non-passive use. As we know this is an open door for invasive species.

Ron Blair said that an elevated bridge could be an option. This would allow for proper water flow and would be less intrusive.

***Motion carried to not approve the trail as designed.***

Deb Lewis, Scott Moats, Liz Christiansen, Gail Brown and Cindy Peterson voted for the motion. Armando Rosales voted against the motion.

Armando Rosales said he struggles with protecting the preserve but also allowing people to enjoy the preserve.

***Motion was made by Deb Lewis to not allow any new biking trails regardless of its design or placement through Lamson Woods. Seconded by Liz Christiansen. Motion carried.***

Deb Lewis, Liz Christiansen, Gail Brown, Cindy Peterson and Armando Rosales voted for the motion. Scott Moats voted against the motion.

## **VINCENT BLUFF MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Glen Pollock of the Loess Hills Preservation Society submitted a draft management plan for Vincent Bluff, a proposed prairie preserve in Council Bluffs.

John Pearson said that the plan is very straight forward addressing brush control, push back of the wooded area and managing the forest area for a savanna. It is an acceptable plan. The next step would be to bring a finished proposal to the April meeting, at that point, the decision can be made on whether or not the board wants to move forward with preserve status.

***Informational***

## **GLENWOOD RESOURCE CENTER**

John Pearson said that after the last meeting, some complications arose since there is farmland on the Glenwood Resource property. That land is managed by the Iowa Prison Industries (IPI) within the Department of Corrections, which requires legislative action in order to remove this land from IPI. At the moment, we are waiting for an official confirmation from Human Services. Once confirmed, then we will begin the procedure of notifying other departments.

There is a multi-property document that is being produced that will re-look at all of the Glenwood archeological sites in the area.

### **HARTMAN BLUFF**

Vern Fish, Director of Black Hawk County Conservation board said that the original management plan for Hartman Bluff did not include how to deal with stormwater issues.

Laura Jackson's UNI biology students gave a presentation on the urban stormwater runoff problem within the preserve. The preserve is boarder by residential areas on two sides and a school on the other resulting in stormwater runoff problems such as erosion in the ravine. Rip-rap has been laid down to help with run-off. We anticipate this to be only a temporary fix. Throughout the project, we have been using the EPA's nine step protocol. This has helped with the development, implementation and evaluation of the project once completed. The ultimate goal is to make the urban community function as much as possible by increasing the infiltration. By doing that, we will reduce the amount of water going into the storm drains as well as purifying the water. The ways to increase infiltration is by best management practices. Low impact BMPs would include a rain garden and/or a down spout rain barrel. We are hoping to bring this out into the community and raising awareness on how they can help preserve the nature areas around them.

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### **CEDAR ISLAND**

Isaiah Mesterly, Becky Growhence and Kim Creling, UNI graduate students gave a presentation on the Cedar Island. It is a 514 acre natural area along the Cedar River in Black Hawk County may be nominated as a new preserve. This is mainly used for hunting but hikers, bikers and some horse riding. There are many different communities at this site including burr and red oak savanna, dry, sandy grassy uplands, numerous wetlands, turtle nesting sites and a few unique species.

The Nature Conservancy owns this land. It is rated as a G-1 threatened community, which means there are five or fewer sites that exist like this in the entire world.

One of the concerns we are addressing is brush encroachment. We continue to do restoration work with efforts from UNI students, friends group and other volunteers.

In 2007, we have identify over 90 plant species, 40 unknown plant species, 40 species of birds and the unique turtle breeding habitat.

We are planning to have a field day with the local high school to hold botany sessions or watching a prescribed burn.

Cindy Peterson said that there may be possibilities for archeological findings in the terraces.

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## **PRESERVE UPDATES**

### **Williams Prairie Update**

Scott Moats said that Williams Prairie is owned and managed by the Nature Conservancy. Johnson County Conservation Board has mentioned interest in managing Williams Prairie. They would have more staff available to manage this better than what we are able to do now. There is potential to transfer the title and the property fee title to the Johnson County Conservation Board or set up a management agreement with them.

Scott will keep the board updated.

### **Eureka Woods**

A property located on the northwest side of the preserve was acquired by the Greene County Road Department, which cleared trees on part of the site. At the owner's request, the preserve boundary was checked and boundary signs were provided. No problem was noted during a field visit in November.

### **Hanging Bog**

John Pearson said that the hillside seep in the preserve was used as a reference site in October by the US Army Corp of Engineers wetland regulatory office during an analysis of revised wetland designation rules.

Scott Moats said that there is potential acquisition for the Nature Conservancy to acquire a piece of wetland adjacent to Hanging Bog.

### **Silver Lake Fen**

John Pearson said that there is a bicycle trail being planned to encircle Silver Lake and to pass along the boundary of the preserve. There is also a sub-division being built on the east side. We have been gathering some ideas on how to deal with the run off from the building site.

### **Woodland Mounds**

John Pearson said that there have been reports of possible digging near mounds in the preserve. The Office of the State Archaeologist, the Indian Advisory Council, the State Historic Preservation Office, the Warren County Conservation Board, the Preserve Board chair and the DNR preserves staff investigated the area and no damage was found but we identified the need to discontinue mowing of the mounds.

### **Merritt Forest**

John Pearson said that trees have been cut from this preserve without approval. DNR law enforcement officials are investigating on whether or not they can track who is responsible for this damage.

### **OPEN DISCUSSION**

Vern Fish offered Black Hawk County Conversation Board center – Hartman Reserve as a potential site for the Preserve Managers conference in July.

John Pearson agreed this would be a great and will work towards having the conference in Black Hawk County.

### **NEXT MEETINGS**

April 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> - canoe trip tour of Slindy Mounds and then proceed to Hartley Fort. Both are archeological sites.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

<i><b>Motion was made by Scott Moats to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Gail Brown. Motion carried.</b></i>
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With no further business to come before the State Preserves Advisory Board, Chairperson Cindy Peterson adjourned the meeting at 11:55 AM on January 18, 2008.

<b>A</b>	
Adjournment, 7	
Approval of agenda, 1	
Approval of Minutes, 1	
<b>B</b>	
Board Members Present, 1	

<b>C</b>
call to order, 1
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## **H**

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## **N**

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## **O**

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Proposed Trail at Lamson Woods preserve, 2

## **R**

RFP for Fiscal year 2009, 2

## **S**

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staff present, 1

## **V**

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Woodland Mounds, 7